

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 03552 171232Z

53

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8576

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AHEMBASSY JAKARTA 5698

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3552

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MY TH

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN'S VISIT TO THAILAND

REF: A) BANGKOK 3260

SUMMARY: THE OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTERS HUSSEIN ONN AND KHUKRIT PRAMOT WERE APPARENTLY HONEST, STRAIGHT-FORWARD, AND CORDIAL. THAI CONCERNS WERE EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR MUSLIM SEPARATISTS, POLITICAL ASPECTS OF CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS AGAINST COMMUNIST TERRORISTS (CT'S), AND SMUGGLING. KEY MALAYSIAN CONCERNS WERE SOLVING BORDER PROBLEMS, THE CT'S' NEAR IMMUNITY FROM RTG ACTION IN THAILAND, AND DOMESTIC MALAYSIAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THE MUSLIM MINORITY PROBLEMS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. THE GENERAL BORDER COMMITTEE (GBC) IS ABOUT TO ENJOY A RENAISSANCE. END SUMMARY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 03552 171232Z

1. A THAI MFA OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN PRIME MINISTER DATUK

HUSSEIN ONN'S VISIT TO THAILAND TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER FEB 13 THAT HUSSEIN'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT WERE HONEST, STRAIGHT-FORWARD, AND SEEMED TO GO EXTREMELY WELL. THE TWO PM'S HAD LENGTHLY PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS THE EVENING OF FEB 11 AND THE MORNING OF FEB 12 BEFORE THE OFFICIAL CONFERENCE.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR INTERLOCUTOR, KHUKRIT BEGAN THE OFFICIAL MEETING BY PRESENTING THE THAI POSITION ON BORDER PROBLEMS. KHUKRIT SAID THE THAI WERE CONCERNED ABOUT MALAYSIAN AND THIRD-COUNTRY SUPPORT TO THE SEPARATISTS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND, THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM OF CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS AGAINST THE COMMUNIST TERRORISTS, AND SMUGGLING. KHUKRIT SAID WHILE IT WAS NOT MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY TO SUPPORT THE SEPARATISTS, THE THAI KNEW THERE WAS SUPPORT COMING FROM LOWER-RANKING MALAYSIAN OFFICIALS. KHUKRIT NOTED THAT THE CT IN SOUTHERN THAILAND CREATED A REAL MALAYSIAN PROBLEM BUT WERE NOT SUCH A PROBLEM TO THE THAI, ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY.

3. IN RESPONSE, HUSSEIN REPORTEDLY TOLD KHUKRIT THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WANTED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS ALONG THE THAI BORDER "AT ANY COST." HUSSEIN EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING THAI AND MALAYSIAN TREATMENT OF THE MUSLIMS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. HUSSEIN SAID HIS MAIN CONCERNS WERE THE ABILITY OF THE CT TO OPERATE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND ALMOST WITH IMPUNITY, AND THE NECESSITY TO DESTROY THE CT ORGANIZATION, WITH THAI ASSISTANCE, BEFORE IT GOT OUT OF HAND. SMUGGLING AND FISHING RIGHTS ALSO CONCERNED HUSSEIN.

4. THE THAI MFA OFFICIAL SAID THE PRIME MINISTERS RE-ESTABLISHED THE GENERAL BORDER COMMITTEE BUT AT THREE LEVELS: THE PRIME MINISTERS WILL DECIDE POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE SECOND LEVEL - THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR--WHO IN TURN WILL ESTABLISH POLICY FOR THE THIRD, WORKING LEVEL. THE LOCAL OFFICIALS WILL IMPLEMENT DECISIONS FROM ABOVE. THE MFA OFFICIAL COMPLAINED THAT THE GBC, AS ESTABLISHED IN 1970 UNDER THE SUPREME COMMAND, WAS MORIBUND AND NEVER PRACTICAL. THE PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW COMMITTEE FORMATION EMANATED FROM THE THAI

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 03552 171232Z

MFA IN SEPTEMBER, 1975, BUT WITH THE SECOND LEVEL HEADED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE THAI MFA OFFICIAL SAID THE MALAYSIAN MFA COULD NOT WREST THE COMMITTEE AWAY FROM THE CONTROL OF HOME MINISTER GHAZALIE SHAFIE, SO THE NEW SECOND LEVEL GBC HAS TO BE UNDER THE INTERIOR MINISTERS INSTEAD.

5. THE THAI MFA OFFICIAL HOPES THE INTEREST OF THE PRIME

MINISTERS IN GOOD RELATIONS WILL TRICKLE DOWN TO THE LOCAL OFFICIALS AND OVERCOME PAST LACK OF TRUST AND COOPERATION. THE PRIME MINISTERS ALSO TOUCHED ON THE UPCOMING ASEAN SUMMIT, FISHING RIGHTS AND PALM OIL DURING THE OFFICIAL DISCUSSION, BUT NOT AT ANY LENGTH.

6. OUR INFORMANT WAS NOT PRIVY TO WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED DURING HUSSEIN'S DINNER WITH THE KING IN CHIANG MAI, NOR WHAT HUSSEIN AND KHUKRIT HAD DISCUSSED A DEUX ON A COUPLE OF OCCASIONS. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION, THOUGH, THAT THESE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT GREATLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE SUBSTANCE REPORTED ABOVE.
WHITEHOUSE

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